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ABSTRACT

This booklet provides a general blueprint to guide the overall process of teaching a student to be motivated to achieve and offers specific ideas for those concerned with promoting self-motivated behavior among students. Part one discusses teaching and learning self-motivation concepts and principles. These topics are covered: motivation as a trait or as a state; benefits of self-motivation; understanding the process of self-motivation; organizing for motivation; avoiding motivation pitfalls; self-motivation hints for parents, teachers, and students; and parents and homework. A student motivation inventory is provided. Part two discusses beginning the process of helping students to become self-motivated and successful. Thirty-six 1-minute motivation pointers are included which provide ideas for parents and teachers to use to motivate students. These pointers range from encouraging students to read biographies emphasize traits of successful persons which students can informally mimic, to teaching students to be reflective upon their own learning from both good and bad experiences. The report concludes that each student can benefit greatly when parents and school staff members assume responsibility for making self-motivation of students a high priority in daily learning activities. A bibliography is included. (ABL)

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Helping Students Develop Self-Motivation

A Sourcebook for Parents and Educators

By Donald R. Grossnickle

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The National Association of Secondary School Principals
Reston, Virginia

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Helping Students Develop Self-Motivation

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By Donald R. Grossnickle

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Reston, Virginia

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- *Promoting Effective Student Motivation in School and Classroom: A Practitioner's Perspective* (with William B. Thiel)

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Foreword

During a recent American Educational Research Association Convention, a program featured a panel of high school students who spent several months evaluating the "Five Ps" of their school: people, policies, programs, places, and processes.

As part of their presentation, the students showed a videotape of their high school. How this tape was made explains a lot about the topic addressed in this monograph.

One panel member was given the responsibility of making the videotape. When she began her work she discovered that the school's portable taping equipment, with heavy backpack and powerpak lighting, weighed more than she could possible handle. All the other panel members were in class, but she knew of one student who might help her out—a brooding, "unmotivated" student who had been kicked out of class and was spending time in the school suspension center.

The girl went to the center and got permission to invite the suspended student to help carry the videotaping equipment. His reaction, while surly, was not entirely negative. Since there was nothing better to do in "this dump" he might as well. Then a miracle happened.

Once the suspended student learned the purpose of the videotaping—to show their school to a national audience—he became more and more involved and animated. Soon, he was giving the directions. "Pan down this corridor," he directed. "Catch the color from the skylight....Show this group of students laughing." The suspended student became more and more excited and elated.

As the two students went about their work, looking a little like a team from network TV news, teachers, counselors, and administrators watched the suspended student with disbelief. For a brief moment, this "unmotivated," "disconnected," "disaffected"

potential dropout became a whirling dervish of excitement, enthusiasm, and commitment to school.

This little episode seems to reveal that human potential and motivation, while not always obvious, are always there, waiting to be discovered and invited forth. It suggests that individuals are always motivated. They may not do what we want them to do, but they are always motivated. As this monograph explains, no one can "make" another become motivated. The secret of success is sending the right invitation at the right time to the right person. When this happens, almost anything is possible.

William Watson Purkey
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Introduction

"...Teaching happens when a person begins learning (on his own) how to do certain things. It happens when that person freely chooses to extend himself in order to find answers to questions he poses for himself, and when he acts to move beyond what he has learned by rote....(It) happens when a student begins to understand what he is doing, when he becomes capable of giving reasons and seeing connections within his experiences, when he recognizes the errors he or someone else is making and can propose what should be done to set things straight." Maxine Green in Teacher as Stranger: Educational Philosophy for a Modern Age.

Teaching self-motivation and self-responsibility are two of the most difficult and challenging tasks parents and educators face. Successful preparation for life is complex, demanding a well-developed capacity to be self-directed and self-managing and the ability to negotiate obstacles and avoid temptations.

Nobody has discovered the sure-fire secret to successfully motivating every student. Nobody has found the single formula that inspires self-motivated students. What educators and parents need, however, are some practical tools to help replace unmotivated students' patterns of failure with a success-oriented cycle leading to achievement and self-motivation.

Students must be adequately prepared to meet life's inevitable "stormy seas." They must not only develop the motivation to plan a pathway to success, but must also have the skills to achieve success. It's more than just getting on the right track and staying there.

Parents and educators must work together to establish realistic opportunities for students to develop and practice responsibility and self-management skills. This booklet provides a general blueprint to guide the overall process of teaching a student to be motivated to achieve and offers specific ideas those concerned with promoting self-motivated behavior in students can use.

Part I
Teaching and Learning Self-Motivation Concepts and Principles

Motivation to learn, according to Brophy (1986), is a particular kind of human motivation. It may be viewed as either a temporary state or a permanent trait. People's readiness to be motivated changes and we hope that as young people grow older and more mature, they will demonstrate more and more responsible behavior at home and in school. Brophy explains the two types of motivations to learn as:

Motivation as a Trait: An enduring disposition to value learning as a worthwhile and satisfying activity, a striving for knowledge and mastery in learning situations.

Motivation as a State: A state of motivation guided by a goal or intention. Students reveal motivation to learn when they complete assignments or lessons.

Everyone is motivated, but not with the same intensity or toward the same goals. We each respond differently to the attempts of others to motivate us. Some individuals accept these attempts more readily than others. For each person, motivation, like bathing, is a daily process. It must be done often for the best results. It becomes a habit—not necessarily of doing more, but of doing things differently.

Self-motivation must be practiced in order for it to become a habit. Educators and parents can assist students to learn to help and motivate themselves by helping them clarify their needs, choose and seek their goals, and learn how other achievers reach their goals. Parents and educators cannot—nor should they—do the job of motivation for the students.

Benefits of Self-Motivation

Research supports the notion that students can learn to achieve. This process is much more like strengthening a weak muscle than undoing an unfavorable past—it is a training process and progress checks are helpful (Alschuler, 1973).

Students who are self-motivated:

- Learn to gradually accept more and more responsibility for their actions, establish priorities, and plan to achieve goals for the future
- Learn to identify and use appropriate tools that will help solve

Chart 1 A Self-Test Characteristics of Achievers	I'm always like this.	I'm usually like this.	I'm sometimes like this.	I'm seldom like this.	I'm never like this.
1. Self-reliant and self-confident					
Evidence:					
2. Realistic about my strengths and weaknesses					
Evidence:					
3. Feel responsible for own activities; don't make					
excuses and blame others					
Evidence:					
4. Set challenging but possible goals					
Evidence:					
5. Plan carefully and intelligently					
Evidence:					
6. Take personal obstacles into account					
Evidence:					
7. Take world obstacles into account					
Evidence:					
8. Know how to find and use help					
Evidence:					
9. Keep working toward goals					
Evidence:					
10. Check progress					
Evidence:					
11. Like to achieve and dislike not achieving					
(Imagine what it will be like to achieve or not to)					
Evidence:					
12. Want to do a better job in better ways					
Evidence:					
13. Use an achieved goal as a basis for new goals					
Evidence:					

From *Raising Children to Achieve*, by Eric W. Johnson. Copyright 1984 by Eric W. Johnson. Reprinted with permission from Walker and Company, publishers.

life's predictable challenges and problems

- Learn to feel better about themselves, become more self-aware, and develop habits, abilities, and attitudes that support achievement
- Are more self-managing and self-disciplined
- Learn to set and achieve realistic and challenging goals, cope with setbacks and obstacles, and take calculated risks
- Learn to communicate effectively with educators and parents and identify and resolve conflict
- Learn to be organized, use time effectively, make decisions, and be open-minded about their future
- Unlock their potential and eliminate fear of failure by building on their own strengths and assets
- Learn to be self-reliant but capable of calling on others for support as they learn to plan, monitor progress, and replan as necessary.

Understanding the Process of Self-Motivation

Self-motivation and self-control—both characteristics of achievers—are learned behaviors that develop with practice, experience, and guided training. The self-control development continuum provides a framework that parents and educators can use to assess the student's ability to be self-regulating.

Ideally, young people reach Stage Four when they share adult values and expectations. They learn to apply strategies to achieve their own goals and priorities. As a team, parents and educators can help the student develop increasingly higher levels of autonomy and independence.

Organizing for Motivation

Students have a hard time being motivated if they are not organized. To be organized, they must know how to manage their time wisely. Therefore, one of the most practical devices for organizing time and becoming self-motivated in school and at home is a pocket calendar.

Students can use the calendar to record special events, target dates for goal completion, major assignments, test days, work

Chart 2

Self-Control Developmental Continuum

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Behavior Descriptors	Needs routines modeled Impulsive	Knows routines when directed Delays impulsivity when directed	Often initiates routines Often regulates impulses voluntarily	Self-initiates routines Self-regulates
	Off task	Remains on-task for short duration	Remains on-task for expected time limits	Remains productive beyond expected time limits
	Easily distracted; daydreams	Distracted by selected stimuli	With effort, sustains attention despite environmental distractions	Remains focused consistently despite distractions
	Poor problem-solving strategies; requires adult direction	Problem-solving approaches emerge; relies on adult reminders	Usually initiates reliable strategies; dependent on adult evaluation	Mentally prepared to anticipate, initiate, complete problem-solving strategies
	Disorganized; does not complete tasks; quality of work poor	Minimally organized; dependent on adult for task assistance; erratic accuracy	Organized; works independently; improved accuracy	Self-starts; completes tasks consistently; self-evaluates quality
Child's Internal Reasoning	Discomfort with adult expectations that conflict with familiar behavior patterns	Willing to comply with adult expectations when the reward is enticing	Trusts environment: meets adult behavioral expectations	Shares adult expectations; confidently risks adopting learned strategies
	"I don't want to do it . . . do I have to?"	"I'll do what you want if . . ".	"I understand why you want me to do this."	"I trust myself to handle this well."
Adult Role	Supplies motivation; models valued behaviors Builds in opportunities for practice	Provides opportunities for rehearsal	Maintains high expectations Commends successful strategies	Serves as mentor
	Gives tangible & intangible rewards for successive approximations	Regularly implements external rewards/prompts	Replaces regular, predictable reinforcement with intermittent reinforcement	Provides encouragement & guidance when needed
Stage Goal	Begins to identify & build awareness of behaviors	Masters expected routines	Begins to value & internalize adult behavioral values	Self-control becomes a satisfying, internalized working system
	Duplicates taught behaviors & expected routines	Often predicts adult expectations & initiates appropriate behavior	Often generalizes previous learning	Behaviors reliably transfer across situations
	Develops one or two problem-solving approaches	Reaches transition between external predictable rewards & internal motivation	Sustains independent effort	Self-appraises realistically Risks making independent choices

Source: Reprinted with permission. Boren, R. and Benegar, C. "Children and Self-Control." In *Children's Needs: Psychological Perspectives*, edited by J. Grimes and A. Thomas. Washington, D.C.: National Association of School Psychologists, 1987, p. 516.

schedules, etc. Practicing the skills of time management requires a daily routine that prevents missed deadlines, procrastination by amnesia, convenient forgetting, and the like.

Maintaining a "to do" list is also a good habit for students to practice as soon as possible. Items on the list should be placed in order of priority. In addition, an assignment notebook ensures availability of clear directions and assignments. The calendar may be carried with the assignment notebook.

Parents and/or educators may also consider sitting down with the students to identify their perceived motivators and to discuss and analyze whether these motivators seem to be extrinsic (outside) or intrinsic (inside). Ideally, the majority of motivation should eventually come from within.

A Student Motivation Inventory

One way to determine a student's motivation is to ask him or her to select 10 motivators from the following list. If they select more Ps than Os, they tend to be more intrinsically motivated. If they have more Os than Ps, they tend to rely more on others to motivate them.

_P-Making Choices
_P-To Belong
_P-Success
_P-Control
_O-Influence
_O-Persuasion
_O-Status
_P-Interest
_P-O-Goals
_P-Creativity
_P-Self-Esteem
_P-Career, Future
_P-O-Guilt
_P-Games
_O-Adult Approval (Teacher/Parent)
_P-Competence
_P-To Be Loved
_P-Overcome Obstacle/Handicap
_P-Power
_P-Relevancy/Perceived Utility
_P-Honor, Family Tradition
_O-Fear of Punishment
_P-Challenge
_P-Encouragement/Coaching
_O-Interesting Activity
_P-Acceptance
_P-Appreciation of Effort
_P-Curiosity/Suspense

_P-Enlightenment
_P-Good Attitude
_O-Avoid Blame
_P-Competition
_O-Money
_P-Independence
_P-Duty/Obligation
_P-O-Cooperation
_O-Peer Approval
_O-Recognition/Acknowledgment
_O-Model/Example
_O-Praise
_O-Gaining Privilege
_O-Coaxing
_P-Enjoyment

Avoiding Motivation Pitfalls

Research suggests that we might carefully reflect on effective motivation skills we can use that work and avoid these pitfalls:

Avoid

- Faulty praise or patronizing
- Use of fear and threats; punishment
- Overuse of cliches ("no guts, no glory," etc.)
- Shock value, overstating failure
- Namecalling, nagging, blaming, placing guilt
- Put-downs, comparisons
- Expecting too much or too little
- Rationalizing failure, denying, making excuses
- Ignoring or denying the warning signs of learning problems (especially math and reading).

Some of the excuses that students use for not being motivated are that "nobody understands them"; that the teacher doesn't "like" them, or that school is a boring waste of time. These statements are helpful clues to understanding the meaning behind motivation problems. Most school-related problems can be broken down into 12 categories:

1. *Home problems*: Lack of parental interest, acceptance, role modeling, support; neglect, abuse, alcoholism, inconsistency, financial problems; trouble with step-parents, siblings, or divorce.

2. *Instructional planning problems*: Irrelevant curriculum and

materials; lack of variety in class activities; preponderance of teacher talk and lecture; routine seatwork; academic expectations too high for students; inability of teacher to identify learning problems of students and refer them to help.

3. *Instructional ineffectiveness*: Inflexible, incorrect assumptions regarding student readiness to learn; dull and unenthusiastic teacher performance; overuse of power and authority to control students; lack of rewards, recognition, and encouragement; interfering discipline problems; failure to connect and apply the topic with the real world and the student's future, unclear explanations, too slow or too fast pace.

4. *Impersonal approach*: Lack of concern for the individual student's needs, problems, interests, strengths, and limitations; failure to recognize student's learning style and teach appropriately.

5. *Lack of self-esteem*: Self-concept problems, including dislike of body, race, appearance, or talents; lack of confidence, impatience, limited opportunities for legitimate success; lack of future plans.

6. *Inadequate learning skills*: Inability of students to plan, set goals, study, concentrate, and prepare for tests; procrastination; lack of desire for self-improvement; poor math, writing, and/or reading skills.

7. *Incentive problems*: Inability of students to explore and identify career aspirations, personal goals.

8. *Social skills problems*: Lack of involvement in clubs, sports, and activities; lack of interpersonal communication skills; inability to make friends, work as a team member.

9. *School and classroom climate problems*: Lack of student involvement in choosing or helping to plan learning activities; absence of humor; overemphasis on structure and rules.

10. *Teacher personality and attentiveness problems*: Pessimistic, condescending, sarcastic, assuming, impatient, prejudiced, intolerant, negative, distant, or impersonal relationships.

11. *Emotional adjustment problems*: Lack of available guidance and counseling services; unresolved inner conflict, anger toward teachers; inability to use coping skills in resolving conflict; unacceptance of self and others; inability to make decisions; impulsiveness

12. *Chemical abuse problems*: Personal problems with drug and alcohol involvement or dependency; alcohol-related family problems.

In summary, "problem-finding" efforts ideally come before problem-solving efforts. Einstein (1938) said, "the formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of skill." In resolving motivation-related academic problems, there are rarely short cuts. Plans for improvement that are put into writing by the student have the best chance for success.

Self-Motivation Hints for Parents, Teachers, and Students

Teachers, parents, and students can work together to encourage student motivation, but this requires involvement and commitment by everyone.

For example, parents and teachers can insist that students have a written planning process before tackling reports, term papers, and other major projects. Ultimately, the long-term goal is for the student to establish and follow up on his or her own internal planning process. Some external "short-term" structure and organization may be necessary as they develop new "habits."

Ideally, the student and teacher develop a plan. Parents monitor due dates and impose consequences and sanctions for lack of progress as appropriate. Some definitive steps to help the student replace a failure pattern with a better alternative require some action.

For example, prior to a test or quiz, parents and teachers can remind students to:

- Review notes, handouts, textbooks, and objectives several times before the day of the test to relax, increase confidence, and reduce anxiety
- List things they have learned through quizzes or class activities
- Ask a family member to create a trial test of predictable questions
- Review material with another student—preferably a successful one
- Ask for tutoring or teacher help at least one day before the exam
- Draw a map of concepts and ideas and see how facts fit together

- Rest, relax, and prepare for the test psychologically and physically
- Set realistic goals and improve on their own personal best
- During the test, read the directions and questions and then reread them to avoid misinterpretation
- Do not spend too much time on any one question.

Both parents and educators must do everything possible to provide opportunities to help students learn to motivate themselves. Naturally, it is much easier to begin patterns of success early than to replace unsuccessful ones later. Researchers, including Bloom (1981) and others, have identified five key characteristics of the home environment that influence students' academic achievement.

The following ideas promote a teamwork approach to enhancing student success:

- Schoolwide assignment notebooks checked periodically by several teachers
- Parent study skill assistance workshops taught by teachers and PTA members
- Homework hotlines for problems encountered after school hours
- Increased scheduled open house parent conferences throughout the year
- Local television/radio spots encouraging parent support and interest in schools
- Subject-by-subject expectation guidelines mailed to parents
- Computer hardware and software on parenting skills available for check out
- Night math tutorial centers at the school or public library staffed by senior citizens or volunteers
- Study resource centers staffed by honor students during study halls
- Parent-child communication skills workshops
- Ombudsman office where parents can call to get questions about their sons or daughters solved or referred
- Automatic required goal-setting conference for students who fail one or more classes
- Nighttime career exploration counseling available for parent/student joint conferences

- Summer orientation programs for parents and students prior to freshman year
- Required study halls for all students or students with a below B average.

Parents and Homework

"Do you have any homework?" That is probably the most frequently repeated communication between students and their parents. What can parents do to get their students to do their homework on their own? Here are some ideas:

- Discuss and refresh the commonly stated purposes of homework: Review the material they learned that day; encourage independent trial and error that only they can do; extend the classroom by requiring time and attention to creativity
- Provide the stimulation intellectually and aesthetically to set the stage to encourage and create an inviting study environment.
- Be specific when inquiring about homework. Assume the student has work to do and discuss it subject by subject.
- Pay attention to what the student is doing, show interest and support.
- Avoid edicts on time, such as "You will sit there for an hour." Avoid making homework a punishment.
- Encourage and affirm the students as they work; praise their efforts.
- Be careful when checking to ensure that the homework is done. This can divert the task to simply getting it done to patronize mom and dad.
- Don't back off completely and turn the job of completing homework over to them. Avoid extremes of being overly involved or uninvolved.
- When students become frustrated, be there to support them but don't fall into the trap of doing their homework for them. Don't encourage dependency.
- Make it your business to know homework guidelines in each class and what students can do when they don't understand something or how to obtain help.
- Limit television viewing time. This forces the student to plan his or her time.

Relationship Between Home Environment and School Achievement

1. Work habits of the children (and parents)
   - __The degree of structure, sharing, and punctuality in the home activities
   - __Emphasis on regularity in the use of time and space in the home
   - __Priority given to schoolwork, reading, and other educative activities over TV and other recreation
2. Academic guidance and support
   - __Frequent encouragement of the child for his or her schoolwork
   - __Parental knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in the child's school learning and supportive help when it is really needed
   - __Availability of quiet place to study with appropriate books, reference materials, and other learning material
3. Stimulation to explore and discuss ideas and events
   - __Family interest in hobbies, games, and other activities that have educative value
   - __Family use and discussion of books, newspapers, magazines, and TV programs
   - __Frequent use of libraries, museums, and cultural activities by the family
4. Language development in the home
   - __Family concern and help for correct and effective language usage
   - __Opportunities for the enlargement of vocabulary and sentence patterns
5. Academic aspirations and expectations
   - __Parental knowledge of the child's current schoolwork and school activities
   - __Parental standards and expectations for the child's schoolwork
   - __Parental educational and vocational aspirations for the child.

From *All Our Children Learning: A Primer for Parents, Teachers, and Other Educators*, by Benjamin Bloom. Published by McGraw-Hill, 1981. Used with permission.

- Establish a regular time and place for home study; take a stand on the value of studying.
- Occasionally allow students to study with friends, as it is one means of encouraging studying. However, in most cases it should not be an everyday occurrence.
- Do not allow homework to become the source of chronic argument, conflict, fighting, or nagging. This will result in an unproductive, antagonistic relationship between parent and student.
- Develop a mutually agreeable study schedule, monitor student achievement of stated goals. Be consistent.
- Model reading by bringing the family together for short periods of quiet reading.

"Sorry – you'll have to find the self-help books on your own."

Reprinted from *Phi Delta Kappan*, November 1988, with permission of the cartoonist, George B. Abbott.

Part II
Beginning the Process of Helping Students Become Self-Motivated and Successful

Parents are busier today than at any other time in history. Because the time parents and students spend together is limited, it is important to make every minute count. What follows are ideas parents and teachers can read in one minute or less. However, putting most of these ideas into practice will require a little more time. This time can be well-invested in promoting self-motivated, lifelong learning.

When teachers and parents make a conscious effort to master the art of motivating others, they, in turn, also become motivated. The more a parent or teacher uses these ideas, the more they will be motivated to help motivate their students.

One-Minute Motivation

- In setting expectations and standards for grades and achievement, encourage students to improve on their own personal best. Unrealistic standards that are too high or too low confuse and frustrate students.
- Become knowledgeable about research, study skills, and homework tips that parents can learn, teach, and reinforce.
- Do not allow students to criticize themselves or allow others to criticize them. Such talk must be identified and avoided. Achievers cannot afford to have their minds filled with negative thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. It becomes a bad habit. Use criticism judiciously.
- Teach and practice several methods of decision-making and problem-solving skills. Students must be able to efficiently and effectively solve problems they encounter and learn to be objective. Students must be able to see the advantages of being prepared for predictable problems and plan to minimize difficulties whenever possible.
- Share personal experiences that have led to peaks of success. Students can learn to be self-motivated by learning from others' experiences.
- Actively discuss and investigate future careers, qualifications, and the merits of various jobs. Students who can connect the process of life-long learning to future needs can better understand the value of becoming prepared. Actively match present interests and aspirations to future jobs and careers. Visit job sites,

colleges, or trade schools.

- Explore the self-perceived incentives that seem to motivate students. Taking charge of self-motivation requires a clear understanding of needs and goals. Reflect on the perceived needs and goals that motivated the student in the past.
- Help students practice the ability to visualize success by creating images that include them and their personal goals. Help students list, in writing, their long, medium, and short-range dreams (goals).
- Avoid offering help unless it is requested. Requiring students to help themselves whenever possible encourages autonomy and discourages dependency. Discuss cues students can give adults to politely refuse unsolicited help.
- Insist on written guidelines for organizing time for homework and chores. Develop guidelines together. Require students to record all school assignments in a notebook that is regularly checked.
- Let students hear you brag about them. Celebrate their accomplishments with notice, acclaim, and affection. Praise appropriately. When praising, explain the specific reason for the praise. Supplying positive corrective feedback helps build self-concept and ultimately enhances self-esteem. Catch students being good and let them know you notice.
- Use games to teach strategy, emphasizing the link between strategy and achievement.
- Do not overprotect. Do not interfere with natural consequences under most circumstances. Do not become a rubber crutch for students by meddling in their affairs so they always succeed. When students forget lunches, assignments, etc., do not establish a pattern of always bailing them out.
- Learn to guide and step aside. Students cannot learn to experience the "feel" of ownership for their behavior unless it is actually given to them. Allow them to make certain choices and carefully select opportunities for them to see the results, even if it seems that the choices are not the best ones.
- Encourage students to read biographies. By comparing and contrasting traits of successful persons, students can informally learn and mimic success patterns.
- Establish and consistently enforce rules, but keep them to a

minimum. Most students are comfortable and secure with structure; they like to know where they stand. Inconsistency and too much flexibility open the door for trouble, misunderstood messages, and possible failure.

- Break down big jobs or projects into a step-by-step, manageable process so students are not overwhelmed. Avoid harassing and nagging; refer to task aids to guide completion of jobs. Suggest a routine that will help accomplish assigned tasks.
- Encourage each student's hobbies, interests, and curiosity. The individual identity of each person is nurtured through explorations of their interests. Parents and educators convey support, encouragement, and affirmation by helping the student nurture his or her interests. Parents should attend events that interest the student, show support by being interested in the student's activities.
- Support students after defeat or failure. Discourage self-pity. Students must recognize that only they can be in control of their lives. Only they can rid themselves of pity, despair, or failure. Focus on hopefulness and fresh starts. Teach students that failure is not fatal. Problems must be viewed as temporary.
- Don't underestimate or overestimate the readiness/maturity factor in self-motivation. There is no universal answer for when to or when not to nudge or challenge a student to apply himself or herself. Teach students to stretch themselves and test their limits when they are ready.
- Recognize that all motivation cannot and should not originate from within. Sometimes it is appropriate to be self-directed and motivated and sometimes a push from the outside is helpful. Also help students differentiate between luck and external and internal sources of control.
- Affirm individuality and personal identity. Underachieving students especially benefit from parents and educators who communicate acceptance of them. Find specific ways to let students know they are likable. This is especially important for students who do not do well in school.
- Don't let reading or math problems spoil students' chances of success. Meet non-success in math and reading head-on. Find an approach that replaces failure with success. Help, or find someone who can help the student conquer both of these critically important skills.

- Distinguish between being the "originator" and being a "pawn." Teach, explain, and discuss the characteristics of origins. Then prepare, plan, practice, persist, have patience, perform, put forth effort, check their process, and perfect their skills by improving themselves. Research indicates that when children learn to be originators, they begin to take charge of their lives (deCharms, 1968).
- Encourage participation in cocurricular activities.
- Be aware of a natural tendency to use punishment far more often than reward. Stop yourself from using negative methods to motivate students.
- Teach the benefits of deferring immediate gratification. Focus on both short-term and long-term goals. Help students learn and practice the benefits of deferred satisfaction, such as establishing a savings account.
- Be a mentor. Hold a mirror up for the student to reflect upon his or her status. Often, the difference between success and failure is that someone is able to see something valuable in a person and believes in them, even when they don't.
- Recognize and try to understand the turbulent nature of the testing of personal power and independence that is characteristic of adolescence. Learn about and share with other parents and educators the process of adolescence and the search for independence.
- Avoid a steady diet of competition. Discourage students from always comparing themselves to others—especially siblings.
- Teach students to be reflective. Life teaches us many lessons if we stop and reflect on the value of experiences as they occur. Instead of lecturing or preaching, ask students to reflect on and share what they have taught themselves from both good and bad experiences.
- Allow students to form opinions and draw conclusions from information, not from persuasion. List the positive and negative sides of issues and ask the student to choose a side based on the information only. Encourage independent thinking. Practice separating propaganda and persuasive messages from fact. Discuss peer pressure and ways to respond to it.
- Nurture curiosity. Visit libraries and museums. Take walks. Go camping. Experiment together.
- Use aptitude tests and inventories to explore and clarify inclinations for courses and vocational interests. Offer self-help

guides or professional counselors to help students identify aptitudes and interests.

- Reinforce positive patterns of success. Highlight awards and commendations, and display them prominently.
- Use a sensitive approach in dealing with symptoms of more serious motivation-related problems. Know and identify trouble signs that signal professional help may be required: suspensions, truancy, expulsion, drug or alcohol use, chronic fighting, and other self-destructive behavior.

It's Never Too Late

Morris Mandel (1974) relates this anecdote: "A woman once asked the great psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, 'How early can I begin the education of my child?'

'When will your child be born?' Freud asked.

'Born?' she exclaimed, 'Why, he is already five years old!'

'My goodness, woman,' the psychoanalyst cried, 'don't stand there talking to me—hurry home! You have already wasted the five best years!'"

It's never too late, but it's time to get started. Remember, no simple recipe or formula will work for every student. Mandel also relates that:

"A wise man once observed that a great many children are like wheelbarrows: not good unless pushed. Some are like canoes: they need to be paddled. Some are like kites: if you don't keep a string on them they fly away. A few are like a good watch: open face, pure gold, quietly busy, and full of good works."

In conclusion, it can be seen that there is much complexity involved in parents and educators promoting the development of self-motivation. Every student can benefit greatly when parents and the school staff members assume responsibility for making self-motivation of students a high priority in daily learning activities both at home and in school.

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